

# CONVERSATIONS ABOUT ANTISEMITISM

*at Summer Camp*

antisemitism

Semitism is hostility  
Jewish people. The  
promoted anti

StandWithUs



# *Preface*

With antisemitic incidents continuing to rise in frequency worldwide, it is more and more apparent that this type of hatred is not limited to any one place or age group, neither is it limited to showing up in just one or two ways. The purpose of this booklet is to help you educate campers about antisemitism and have meaningful discussions with them about how they may experience antisemitism and ways they might respond to those situations.

The booklet sets forth several potential scenarios, in age appropriate sections, for such discussions. Each scenario is followed by a brief explanation of why it is problematic, some factual information relevant to that scenario, and actions one might take in response to it. Ideally, a staff member would initially present the scenario and encourage the campers to express their thoughts; then, it would be followed up by providing the information contained in the booklet. It is possible, if not probable, that some campers have experienced one or more of these scenarios, or similar ones, personally. Allowing them to share their own experiences will also contribute to meaningful discussions.

# ANTISEMITISM - DEFINED AND IDENTIFIED

The first step in fighting antisemitism is to define it. Only then can it be identified and adequately addressed. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism is the international consensus definition of antisemitism. This is because it broadly encompasses the real-life experiences of the Jewish community and the many ways antisemitism can manifest. It has been adopted and used by democracies worldwide and by many other organizations and institutions, including sports organizations and universities. The IHRA definition provides that:

**“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions, and religious facilities.” - Working Definition of Antisemitism | IHRA ([holocaustremembrance.com](https://www.holocaustremembrance.com))**

The IHRA definition is followed by additional explanatory information, including eleven contemporary examples of how antisemitism might manifest today, which can be found on the IHRA website. Of course, any potential instance of antisemitism must consider the entire context of the situation, but contemporary examples are commonly seen as forms of antisemitism. They include what might be regarded as more traditional antisemitic stereotypes about Jews, as well as examples of how anti-Israel rhetoric or actions may cross the line into antisemitism.

Antisemitism targets Jews for negative treatment, individually or collectively, by assigning false blame, applying discriminatory standards, and demonizing and dehumanizing Jews. Modern antisemitism frequently uses the Jewish State of Israel as a proxy for Jews as a collective. In short, antisemitism is bigotry. Antisemitism results in the mistreatment of Jews because of bigoted perceptions of Jews. In this way, antisemitism is like:

- Racism, which results in the mistreatment of people of color.
  - Misogyny, which results in the mistreatment of women.
  - Homophobia, which results in the mistreatment of members of the LGBTQ community.
  - Religious intolerance, which results in the mistreatment of people of faith.
- All are a result of bigoted perceptions about those groups.

# ANTISEMITISM ON SOCIAL MEDIA

One of the most common places that antisemitism is found today is online, especially on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok. Social media has the ability to reach a vast audience and posts can be shared easily, so antisemitism spreads rapidly online. Antisemitic themes commonly seen on social media include:

- Glorification of Hitler and the Nazis, for example:
  - Hitler was right.
  - 6MWE (6 Million Wasn't Enough).
- Messages of Holocaust denial or minimization.
- Comparisons of Jews or Israel (seen as the Jewish collective) with the Nazis, especially in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is also seen more generally in terms of traditional antisemitic stereotypes about Jewish world control or domination.
- Denunciation of specific influential Jews (e.g., George Soros) that carries a broader message aimed at all Jews.
- Use of Hitler—or Holocaust-related themes and images as a form of entertainment, for example:
  - Photos of students playing beer pong with red solo cups in the shape of a swastika and raising their hands in the Sieg Heil salute.
  - Photos of a poster asking a fellow student to a school dance using Holocaust-related language (“SWEETHEARTS [dance] WOULD BE A HIT(LER) WITH YOU AND I COULD NAZI MYSELF GOING W/ANYONE ELSE. BE MEIN? YES OR NEIN”).
  - Blatant hateful language about Jews as dirty, greedy, or evil.



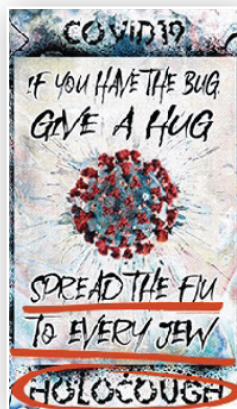
Photo of Baraboo High School students giving Nazi salute for yearbook picture

Credit: Wisconsin Public Radio

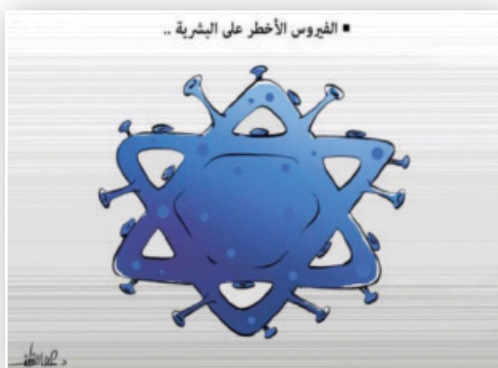


During the global COVID-19 pandemic, many have used social media to scapegoat Jews and Israel in relation to the virus and call for others to attempt to infect Jews with the virus. For example:

- Members of extremist groups have used social media to encourage others to spread the virus to Jews, using the term “holocough.” This term evokes the old antisemitic stereotype of blaming Jews for various illnesses throughout history (including the Bubonic plague in 14th century Europe and the tuberculosis outbreak in the U.S. in the 1890s) and seeks to harm Jews with the current virus physically.
- White supremacist David Duke posted the following on Twitter in March 2020, falsely blaming Israel and Jews for the coronavirus:



- A Palestinian newspaper in Gaza (right) published the following cartoon during the pandemic depicting the Jewish state of Israel, represented by the Star of David, as an adaption of the coronavirus.



## SCENARIOS SPECIFIC FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

### Scenario 1:

(Version 1) My Hillel brought a speaker to campus, and an anti-Israel group disrupted the event.

(Version 2) A student group on my campus brought a speaker who made anti-Israel comments.

### Why is this a problem?

Regardless of political opinions or approaches about Israel, the debate on campus can never cross over to hate speech. Hate speech attacks a person or group because of immutable characteristics, such as ethnicity, religion, national origin, race, disability, or gender. Hate speech is generally constitutionally protected, but it may violate school rules. Similarly, when protesters disrupt a speaker, they may violate the speaker's constitutional rights as well as the audience's. Disruptions also often violate university policies and state laws. Disruptive behavior may take many forms, including shouting down a speaker or blocking the entrance to a scheduled event.

### Know the facts:

In many instances, the law and university regulations are on your side. You should be allowed to listen to a pro-Israel speaker without disruption. You should also alert the university when a specific speaker violates its code of conduct. When the university refuses to take action, seek assistance from StandWithUs' legal department.

### How can we address this issue?

Keep all evidence! Make sure to keep all email correspondence from the administration or student government about planning the event and any posts on social media, even if it seems irrelevant.

If you believe that you, your organization, or your event is being discriminated against due to the pro-Israel position advocated at the event, you may have a discrimination claim. Contact [Legal@standwithus.com](mailto:Legal@standwithus.com) for help.



## Scenario 2:

(Version 1) My professor talks about unrelated issues like Israeli colonialism, Israeli aggression against the Palestinians, etc., and verbally attacks any students that address it as a problem.

(Version 2) I spoke in class in favor of Israel, or I addressed anti-Israel comments another student made in class, and my professor retaliated against me or lowered my grade.

## Why is this a problem?

Academic freedom means that professors have a right to espouse original or controversial ideas. However, professors should avoid teaching contentious matters that have no relation to the subject(s) they teach, according to professional standards.

By those same standards, professors should grade coursework based on academic principles and should not factor a student's viewpoint into the grade. School policies typically spell out grading criteria for coursework.

## Know the facts:

You have the right to share your point of view on a matter discussed in the classroom or express your concern when you believe the taught material is factually wrong or discriminatory. You have the right to do so without the fear of retaliation. Challenging a professor's statements can be intimidating, but you are not alone. Reach out to [Campus@standwithus.com](mailto:Campus@standwithus.com) or [Legal@standwithus.com](mailto:Legal@standwithus.com).

## How can we address this issue?

You may want to speak to your professor privately instead of confronting him or her in front of the class. Ask your professor about their sources. Offer to bring a speaker or materials presenting a different point of view.

If you are concerned that your professor has or will unfairly lower your grade because you are challenging anti-Israel, antisemitic, or hate speech, maintain written evidence of your concerns and any correspondence with the professor. Try to collect evidence, including class recordings, if permitted by your school policies. If the professor refuses to make any changes to the lecture or curriculum, bring your concerns to the attention of the administration or outside organizations.

### Scenario 3:

(Version 1) My student group brought a resolution to student government defining and condemning antisemitism and was met with an aggressive campaign.

(Version 2) An anti-Israel group brought a resolution to the student government defining antisemitism in a form that ignores the Jewish connection to Israel, and it passed.

### Why is this a problem?

In many universities, student government resolutions may have an actual effect on the student population. Though most student bodies focus on student and campus life issues, some choose to address matters of international affairs that might be of concern to a particular group. It is essential to understand the effect that some resolutions have on certain groups on campus and maintain that they do not discriminate against them.

### Know the facts:

Antisemitism is the hatred of Jews expressed in speech, writing, or imagery, which typically results from a lack of information, misinformation, a prejudiced bias, or genuine hatred. The way antisemitism has manifested itself over the centuries has changed. Modern antisemitism frequently uses the Jewish State of Israel as a proxy for Jews as a collective. It is important to define what constitutes antisemitism in order to address and fight it. This definition must be in language that is accepted and agreed upon by the Jewish community on campus.

IHRA developed a Working Definition of Antisemitism (see page 3 for the text of the definition). It is the consensus definition within the Jewish community at large and among many of the world's democracies.

### How can we address this issue?

If you experience these issues at your college, know that they are not isolated to your campus. These resolutions and campaigns are common on campuses that have active anti-Israel groups.

It is crucial that the voice of the Jewish community is heard when discussing antisemitism.





If you hear about a negative campaign to define antisemitism, alert your student group and local Jewish organizations such as Hillel or Chabad. Organizations like StandWithUs have experience dealing with these campaigns nationally and can provide your group tools to address them and vocalize your objection.

If your organization seeks to pass a resolution defining antisemitism in accordance with the guidelines of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism, this should be thoroughly planned and strategized with other Jewish organizations and allies on campus. Remember that such a campaign might encounter strong opposition from other groups, school administration, and even within the Jewish community. StandWithUs has been active in several campaigns to adopt the IHRA definition and can provide your organization with resources and support.



## COMMON SCENARIOS FROM CAMPERS

### A note to camp staff:

This section aims to provide counselors with an introduction to potential scenarios or questions that campers or other participants at camp might bring to them. It by no means covers all possible scenarios and is not intended to replace professional advice or services.

If you feel that your camper might be a victim of a violent event, share the information with senior staff at camp or with the camp social worker, if applicable. You may follow procedures set forth at your camp.

Like other victims of hate crimes, many individuals who experience verbal or physical antisemitic violence feel confused and alone. Regardless of the nature of the event or if the person confiding in you was an active victim or a passive bystander, it is vital to show them that they are being heard and that they are not alone.

Sometimes, based on the overall context, it is clear that some comments were said naively and without any malicious intent. Nevertheless, it's important not to dismiss these comments even when it is clear they were told naively. You should empathize with your camper and assure them that you are taking this matter seriously.

All incidents can be reported by going to [www.standuptohatred.com/report](http://www.standuptohatred.com/report).

### Scenario 1:

A classmate used a derogatory term to refer to me (e.g., a dirty Jew, a kike, a shyster, etc.).

#### Why is this a problem?

Using slanderous words to attack Jewish people isn't new. Throughout history, verbal violence often accompanied physical violence against Jews or, at the very least, was used to target, humiliate, or isolate them. We've been noticing these terms being used either out of context or without any malicious intent in recent years. Often, this happens due to ignorance about the historical reference or meaning of these terms. However, ignorance is never an excuse for violence.

## Know the facts:

Antisemitism is discrimination against Jews based on non-Jewish misperceptions of their identity. Antisemitism has mutated in different eras. In religious times, Jews were perceived negatively on religious grounds. In 19th and 20th century Europe, Jews were perceived negatively based on false notions of race. Today, Jews are perceived negatively due to their collective association with the Jewish State of Israel. These ideas are expressed in speech, writing, or imagery, resulting in persecutions down through the centuries.

## How can we address this issue?

- You should understand the background of the event described by your camper and find out if there were other instances where this behavior was displayed.
- Regardless of whether this is the first time your camper has experienced this behavior or if this an ongoing issue, it should be appropriately addressed. We should educate our community about this terminology and why it's hurtful. Antisemitism is bigotry and blind hatred, just like racism, misogyny, homophobia, and religious intolerance.
- If you sense that this is a more severe issue, reach out to senior staff or a social worker at camp to have them share this event with us so that we can help you assess the situation.

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## Scenario 2:

A classmate shared/liked a social media post that used a derogatory term against Jews.

## Why is this a problem?

Similar to the previous scenario, using slanderous words to attack a Jewish person verbally is unacceptable. The public nature of this specific scenario elevates its seriousness.

## Know the facts:

While social media can be used for good, it is also increasingly becoming a space for racism, sexism, homophobia, religious extremism, and conspiracy theories. Many of these slanderous attacks are aimed at Jewish people or Judaism. In





fact, the Anti-Defamation League found that approximately 4.2 million English language antisemitic tweets were disseminated in 2017 alone. Many people share or like posts because they relate to some parts or support the individual who wrote them. At times, they do that without fully understanding some of the racial terminology used.

### **How can we address this issue?**

- Let the camper know they are right to be offended by bigoted posts on social media. No form of racism or discrimination is acceptable, definitely not in the public sphere, regardless of who originally posted it.
  - Ask the camper if the post is still available online or if they saved a screenshot of it. Since cell phones might not be permitted at camp, ask them to describe the post or direct you to it (if it is still available online).
  - You should involve a professional at camp who can help address bullying issues (a social worker or the camp director). It is also important to assess if this post originated from malice or ignorance.
  - Encourage the camper to share the post with you. Remind them that this post is already public, and reporting or addressing it cannot be traced back to them in any way. If they do, share the information with us.
  - StandWithUs can help the camper's family address this issue with their school administration and community.
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### **Scenario 3:**

Someone vandalized a school/synagogue/public building in my community with antisemitic graffiti (symbols and words).

### **Why is this a problem?**

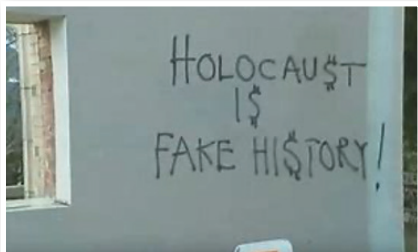
Hateful vandalism of property is often used to intimidate the members of the community it targets. While some may disregard general graffiti painted on street signs and other public property, we must address and report slogans and symbols targeting minority communities. We also need to be aware of any heightened tension and anxiety in the community correlated with these incidents.

### **Know the facts:**

Graffiti is considered an act of vandalism, and vandalism to public or private property is a crime. In many cities and states, vandalism of antisemitic nature may be regarded as a hate crime.

## How can we address this issue?

- It is essential not to disregard these incidents as rare or insignificant. Every hateful graffiti has a destructive effect on its victims.
- Ask your camper if the incident was reported in the local news or addressed by local community leaders.
- Depending upon who owns the property, it may be possible to respond to the hateful graffiti message with a positive message.



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## Scenario 4:

A student in my school organized a program about Israeli war crimes or Israeli apartheid.

## Why is this a problem?

Zionism is the movement supporting the Jewish people's right to self-determination in their ancestral homeland—Israel. Simply put, Zionism demands equality for Jews as a nation. Criticizing Israeli government policies is not necessarily anti-Zionist or antisemitic. However, in some instances, that is the case. For example:

- Refusing to treat Jews as political equals.
- Seeking to strip away Jewish rights to self-determination and end Israel's existence.
- Portraying the Jewish state as a symbol of the greatest evils in the world.
- Only targeting the Jewish state through human rights and other campaigns.

## Know the facts:

The First Amendment provides that people should have the right to express their opinions without being censored or restrained. The First Amendment protects your right to free speech only from government interference. Public schools may not violate the First Amendment's free expression protections because they are considered government entities. However, free speech can sometimes be restricted based on its content. For example, when a speaker makes false statements about another, if those



statements damage another's reputation, they are considered slander. Confrontational words or threats intended to incite immediate violence are also generally not protected.

Many cultural and political figures have come out against these false accusations of war crimes and apartheid, including in the Arab world. Arab citizens of Israel enjoy full and equal rights given to every Israeli citizen. These accusations are commonly used to demonize Israel; however, they have no legal or logical basis in reality.

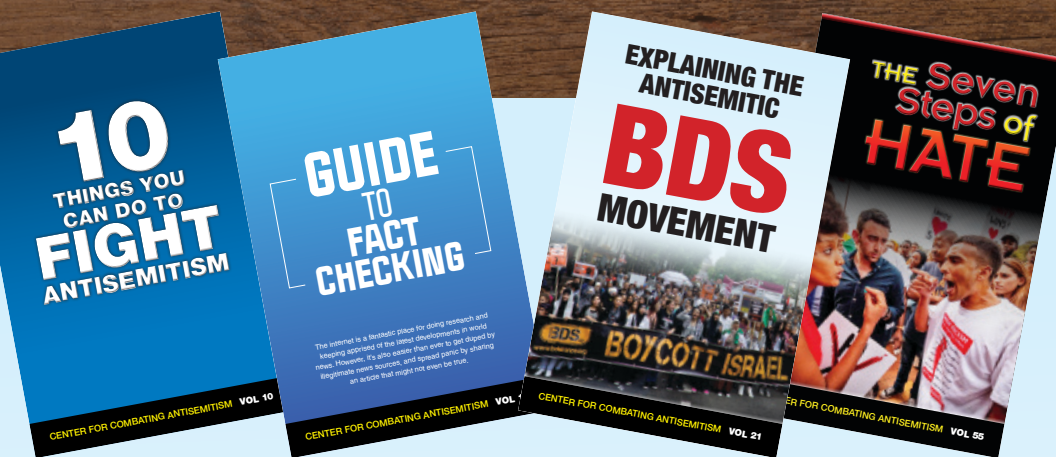
## How can we address this issue?

Students should be allowed to express their ideas and opinions at school programs, in accordance with school guidelines. However, a school event cannot be used as a platform to disseminate false information and hate speech. Events that target and isolate Jewish students because of their support of the Jewish state are unacceptable, regardless of if the school is a public or private establishment.

As you begin the conversation, ask the camper if teachers and parents at the school are aware of this event. Was this event addressed in any way by a teacher or an administrator? If this event wasn't addressed at all, try to learn more information about it, what was said, and in what context. If the camper shares that there was a response, ask them to describe it to the best of their ability.

StandWithUs has the resources and community outreach to address these events with school administrators, school board members, and local governments. However, community involvement is always key to addressing events at school. It's important to gather information and engage with the community. As a camp counselor, your support is instrumental in assisting your camper in resolving this problem. We are here to provide support and the resources to help you.





### For additional resources

[www.StandWithUs.com/highschool](http://www.StandWithUs.com/highschool)

[www.StandWithUs.com/campus](http://www.StandWithUs.com/campus)

[www.FindYourIsraelStory.com](http://www.FindYourIsraelStory.com)

### To report any incidents or for assistance with campus issues

[www.StandUpToHatred.com/report](http://www.StandUpToHatred.com/report)

[Campus@standwithus.com](mailto:Campus@standwithus.com)

[Legal@standwithus.com](mailto:Legal@standwithus.com)

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Supporting Israel & Fighting Antisemitism



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